

children have proper school supplies as fall comes into full swing. Yet the House is set to leave Washington today with many items on its to-do list.

While Congress finishes up the work to pass a budget to fund the Federal Government, catastrophic cuts loom on the horizon, set to hit in January of 2013. Leaving these cuts unresolved is unconscionable. Not only is this the wrong message to send to the American people, it's simply not the right thing to do. Our all-volunteer force is at war, and these cuts threaten our national security. Furthermore, they threaten over 200,000 jobs in Virginia.

Nine days remain before the new fiscal year begins. Congress should do the right thing and stay in Washington instead of ignoring the reality and delaying tough decisions. It's time to put governing over politics. Let's stay in Washington and finish the job that we were elected and expected to do.

CONGRESS MUST STAND UP AGAINST UTILITY CUTS ACROSS THE MIDWEST

(Mr. KUCINICH asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. KUCINICH. The Stop the War on Coal Act is up today. It is the coal industry which is waging war on our mountains by leveling them, war on our lungs by burning dirty fuel, war on healthy children by being the single largest source of mercury exposure, war on our rivers and streams by filling them with toxic waste, war on groundwater through poisonous ash fills, war on its workers through conditions which continue to kill, war on families by breaking unions and by relentlessly reducing jobs, war on our national debt by taking in billions of subsidies, and now war on ratepayers of municipal utilities across the Midwest. Time to stop this war.

Peabody Coal's Prairie State coal plant in southern Illinois has brokered a series of shady deals that puts 217 local utilities here, across the Midwest, on the hook for billions of dollars for energy they may never even get while paying twice the market price—a corrupt boondoggle that will raise utility rates and saddle many publicly owned utilities with crushing debt obligations.

Congress must stand up for the utility cuts in this areas.

HONORING OUTSTANDING ATHLETE STEVEN FOX

(Mr. FLEISCHMANN asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Mr. FLEISCHMANN. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor an outstanding student athlete from the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga. Competing at the U.S. Amateur Championship in Colorado, UTC student Steven Fox came from behind to win the first USGA Championship for the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga.

Down by two holes on the par 5 17th hole, Steven made a clutch birdie and managed to make a great par on the final hole, putting the match into sudden death after 36 grueling holes. At the first playoff hole, Steven sank a critical 18-foot putt to secure his victory. Steven's victory is an inspiration to the entire UTC community and, indeed, to all Tennesseans.

No mention of this victory is complete without mentioning the great UTC golf team, which has achieved national success under the leadership of Coach Mark Guhne. Thanks to his hard work and the support of former Athletic Director Steve Sloan and Chancellor Roger Brown, UTC qualified for this past year's NCAA championship in Los Angeles.

On behalf of all east Tennesseans, I extend my congratulations to Steven Fox. I look forward to watching him roam the fairways at Augusta National soon. I also look forward to many future successes at UTC.

Go Mocs!

□ 0910

BIPARTISAN DEFICIT REDUCTION

(Ms. SCHWARTZ asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. SCHWARTZ. Our Nation is facing serious economic and fiscal challenges. We have seen economic recovery over the last 4 years, but we have work to do.

The fiscal policies that expire at the end of the year, known as the "fiscal cliff," present a rare opportunity to set aside politics and find common ground to reduce our Nation's deficit in a balanced and fiscally responsible manner.

Actions we take must be based on our priorities and our values. It means strengthening the middle class and building economic opportunity. It means spending cuts and new revenues.

We will need to make tough choices, but there is a path forward if we are fair, if we are committed to our obligations to our seniors and our children, and if we recognize the importance of strategic investments to grow our economy now and into the future.

I was proud to be one of just 38 Members to support a bipartisan proposal by Representatives COOPER and LATOURETTE that included tax reform and spending cuts to reduce the Nation's deficit.

Let's move our country forward by taking responsible, meaningful, and timely action.

HOLD THE IRS' FEET TO THE FIRE

(Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. SAM JOHNSON of Texas. Mr. Speaker, it's time for Americans to know the truth about the abuse of

their hard-earned taxpayer dollars, especially at a time when the President is calling for tax increases.

The issue I'm talking about is IRS action that puts billions of taxpayer dollars at risk. Currently, the IRS allows individuals without a Social Security number to get cash benefits—like the \$1,000 refundable child tax credit which is costing American taxpayers billions of dollars—by obtaining an individual taxpayer identification number, or ITIN.

A recent IG report revealed a shocking scandal within the IRS that encouraged employees to fast track ITIN approval without regard to preventing fraud. The ITIN has become a ticket to get cash from Uncle Sam, and this is wrong.

I'm introducing the ITIN Reform Act to hold the IRS' feet to the fire to better protect the American taxpayer, and I urge all my colleagues to support this bill.

HONORING DR. DENTON A. COOLEY

(Ms. JACKSON LEE of Texas asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend her remarks.)

Ms. JACKSON LEE of Texas. Mr. Speaker, on August 3, 1962, a life changing decision was made by Dr. Denton Cooley in the founding of the Texas Heart Institute.

As I listened to the words said this morning, he chose wisdom over ignorance with respect to diagnosing cardiovascular disease, the most devastating killer of Americans, killing a life every 33 seconds, 2,600 lives each day, and nearly 1 million lives each year.

Dr. Cooley was honored this past week with tributes from President George Bush and President William Jefferson Clinton, joined by his wife and extended family. Over the years, he has been able to help men and women and children. He has done a magnificent job with respect to the amount of surgeries that have been performed. He performed more than 118,000 open-heart operations, 258,000 cardiac catheterizations, and 1,270 heart transplants.

The Texas Heart Institute, along with St. Luke's Hospital, continues to serve the world and continues to do research to improve the lives of those who suffer from heart disease. Dr. James Willerson is the new CEO. His demeanor and temperament, his research abilities, and his leadership has taken this great institution to the 21st century.

What a great honor to be with those who honor Dr. Denton Cooley for his wisdom and his ability to challenge medical profession science to be able to save lives. Today, children live, families are reunited, and we are stronger in our health because of the existence of the Texas Heart Institute. It is my privilege to congratulate them for 50 years of saving lives.

POW/MIA RECOGNITION DAY

(Mr. MILLER of Florida asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute and to revise and extend his remarks.)

Mr. MILLER of Florida. Mr. Speaker, I rise today to honor the more than 83,000 Americans still listed as missing in action or prisoners of war. Today is National POW/MIA Recognition Day.

I would like to bring to the attention of my House colleagues the efforts made by the joint POW/MIA Accounting Command to recover and return home to their families our unaccounted for servicemembers.

Also, let us recognize groups such as Rolling Thunder, the Vietnam Veterans of America, the American Ex-Prisoners of War, the National League of POW/MIA Families, and numerous others who ensure those who remain missing are never forgotten, and that our Nation remembers their sacrifice.

This includes Army Private First Class Ithiel Whatley of Escambia County, Florida, who was last seen on July 12, 1950, in Korea and who is remembered every day of the year by his brother Nat.

We salute our POWs and MIAs who have given to this Nation more than we can ever repay. The United States will not rest until each is home and has received the proper burial on American soil they deserve.

Please offer a prayer for those who remain on the battlefields of the past and of the present, and let us pledge that not one is left behind.

VOTER SUPPRESSION

(Ms. SCHAKOWSKY asked and was given permission to address the House for 1 minute.)

Ms. SCHAKOWSKY. Mr. Speaker, this is Constitution Week, when we celebrate our fundamental rights as Americans. Today, one of the most cherished rights, the right to vote, is under serious attack.

Recent efforts to suppress voter participation are designed to silence the voice of American voters, especially seniors, people of color, the poor, and young adults.

In Florida, new restrictions on voter registration led the League of Women Voters to suspend their efforts until the law was halted by the court. Republican legislatures have passed strict voting requirements, although Pennsylvania could not provide even one example of voter fraud. Even elderly veterans, who risked their lives for our country, may be turned away from the polls because they lack the proper IDs. Five million Americans could be disenfranchised.

Anyone who values our Constitution should encourage voting, not erect barriers based on false claims of voter fraud.

STOP THE WAR ON COAL ACT OF 2012

GENERAL LEAVE

Mr. WHITFIELD. Mr. Speaker, I ask unanimous consent that all Members may have 5 legislative days in which to revise and extend their remarks and include extraneous material on H.R. 3409.

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. FLEISCHMANN). Is there objection to the request of the gentleman from Kentucky?

There was no objection.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Pursuant to House Resolution 788 and rule XVIII, the Chair declares the House in the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for the further consideration of the bill, H.R. 3409.

Will the gentleman from Kansas (Mr. YODER) kindly take the chair.

□ 0918

IN THE COMMITTEE OF THE WHOLE

Accordingly, the House resolved itself into the Committee of the Whole House on the state of the Union for the further consideration of the bill (H.R. 3409) to limit the authority of the Secretary of the Interior to issue regulations before December 31, 2013, under the Surface Mining Control and Reclamation Act of 1977, with Mr. YODER (Acting Chair) in the chair.

The Clerk read the title of the bill.

The Acting CHAIR. When the Committee of the Whole rose on Thursday, September 20, 2012, amendment No. 7 printed in House Report 112-680 offered by the gentleman from Maryland (Mr. HARRIS) had been disposed of.

□ 0920

AMENDMENT NO. 8 OFFERED BY MS. JACKSON LEE OF TEXAS

The Acting CHAIR. It is now in order to consider amendment No. 8 printed in House Report 112-680.

Ms. JACKSON LEE of Texas. Mr. Chairman, I have an amendment at the desk.

The Acting CHAIR. The Clerk will designate the amendment.

The text of the amendment is as follows:

Strike section 503 of the committee print.

The Acting CHAIR. Pursuant to House Resolution 788, the gentlewoman from Texas (Ms. JACKSON LEE) and a Member opposed each will control 5 minutes.

The Chair recognizes the gentlewoman from Texas.

Ms. JACKSON LEE of Texas. Mr. Chairman, this is an amendment, I believe, that common sense would allow us to work together and pass.

This amendment would simply maintain the current deadline that existed under the previous administration of 90 days under the Clean Air Act by striking section 503 of the bill which artificially limits agency comment periods on water quality permits to 30 days with no possibility of extension. This existed under President Bush's administration.

Why, then, would my friends on the other side of the aisle not join with me to say let's have regular order? Let's ensure that we give everyone a reasonable opportunity for a response on their quality of life.

On the surface, the intent of H.R. 3409 appears to be to prevent the Interior Department from revising a Bush administration midnight regulation that significantly weakened mountaintop protections on the destructive practice of mountaintop removal mining. Let me remind you, they did not alter the comment period. Mountaintop removal mining, as many of us know, is a very challenging, environmentally difficult process. For many, they say, it creates jobs.

What we are trying to do is to ensure that there is a balance between that industry and, as well, the fairness of allowing those to be able to comment. As it's presently drafted, this bill would reach, in fact, it would make it much more difficult, if you will, to deal with the question of rulemaking.

The people in the State of Texas and the city of Houston appreciate the ability to drink cool, fresh water. So does everyone else. The idea of not being able to comment on the impact of this particular process is challenging.

I ask my colleagues to consider the importance of coming together and extending, or going back to, the 90-day comment period to balance, if you will, the timeframe and to ensure that all are heard on any aspects that would impact the environment, impact the environment of this particular procedure.

With that, I reserve the balance of my time.

Mr. GIBBS. Mr. Chairman, I rise in opposition to the amendment.

The Acting CHAIR. The gentleman from Ohio is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. GIBBS. Mr. Chairman, I object to the amendment.

I reserve the balance of my time.

Ms. JACKSON LEE of Texas. Mr. Chairman, may I ask how much time remains.

The Acting CHAIR. The gentlewoman from Texas has 2½ minutes remaining.

Ms. JACKSON LEE of Texas. I yield 1 minute to the gentleman from Florida (Mr. DEUTCH).

Mr. DEUTCH. I thank the gentlewoman for yielding.

Mr. Chairman, I rise in strong support of the gentlewoman's amendment to yet another bill that will never become law, another bill that feeds into the biggest problem we have here.

The 112th Congress has actually set a sad new low for our democracy. We all know that President Harry Truman famously dubbed the 80th Congress in 1948 as the "do-nothing Congress." Yet the do-nothing Congress of 1948 has nothing on this one. That Congress passed over 900 laws, while the 112th Congress has passed just over 100.

Among the countless laws blocked by the Republican majority is the American Jobs Act, which economists say